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FM AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4979
INFO RHEHNSC/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 6124
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO PRIORITY 7061
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UNCLAS SAO PAULO 000472

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SUBJECT: CORRECTED COPY: MEDIA REACTION: WESTERN HEMISPHERE:
BOLIVIA; SAO PAULO

¶1. "Growing Tensions In South America"

University Professor Sergio Amaral maintained in center-right O Estado de S. Paulo (5/4): "To understand the reason for the tension in South America it is necessary to keep in mind three facts: the emergence of social movements in the Latin American political scenario, the divisive factor represented by the FTAA, and the successive disagreements among Mercosul partners. South America is living a new momentum.... Now it is the social movements' turn. Latin American societies respect democracy and no longer reject liberalizing reforms, but are questioning why their region is growing less than the average of developing economies. Some nations, such as Brazil, have grown less than the African average.... The lack of a convincing answer, both from the right and the left wings, is leading to an increasing social dissatisfaction.... Those who overthrew governments in Argentina, Ecuador and Bolivia were not generals, but from social movements and street demonstrations. The legitimacy of their demands and the lack of prospects for their requests are behind the so-called left leaning of Latin America. More than that, they are conditioning presidential elections and influencing the foreign policy in several nations."

¶2. "GOB's Defeat"

Center-right O Estado de S. Paulo editorialized (5/4): "The transformation of Bolivia into a Venezuelan satellite, which became clear in the meeting between their presidents and dictator Fidel Castro in Havana two days before Evo Morales signed a decree nationalizing oil reserves, represents a major problem for the stability of relations between South American nations. What is worse, however, is the GOB's passiveness in view of the new and worrisome regional scenario.... The GOB's passivity became much more apparent in the reaction - or the lack of it - to Morales' decision."

¶3. "Morales' Reasons"

Economic columnist Luis Nassif commented (5/4) in liberal Folha de S. Paulo: "There is an obvious exaggeration in blaming the Brazilian foreign policy for the Evo Morales episode. Brazil's foreign policy did not elect Morales and will probably facilitate contacts with him.... Bolivia has enormous mineral resources and but lives in African-type poverty.... Morales is facing challenges in his political support base. There is a group proposing insurrection to obtain power, and another supporting constitutionalism. Morales' recent attitudes have much more to do with the constitutionalists than with the revolutionists."

McMullen